Page Denied

Next 2 Page(s) In Document Denied

William Banks Bader

WASHINGTON, March 21 —Flying over the Taiwan Straits on patrol 12 years ago in an AJ-2 attack plane loaded with bombs, William Banks Bader, a young air intelligence officer, got to ruminating about how destruction had become an abstract exercise in which the question of how to kill 300 million Chinese was almost an impersonal, technical problem.

Man in the News

Today he sat in a large mahogany chair behind the Senate Foreign Relations Disarmament Subcommittee in the Senate Caucus Room, and his ruminations of yesteryear were reflected in a contemporary debate. The question was whether to deploy what is probably the most abstract and complex of modern weapons — an anti-ballistic missile system.

As much as any man, Mr. Bader, a 37-year-old staff consultant to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, has shaped and guided the ABM debate in the Senate. In the anonymous way of a Senate aide, he has raised the questions and presented the issues for the Senators to explore as they tried to build up their case against ABM deployment.
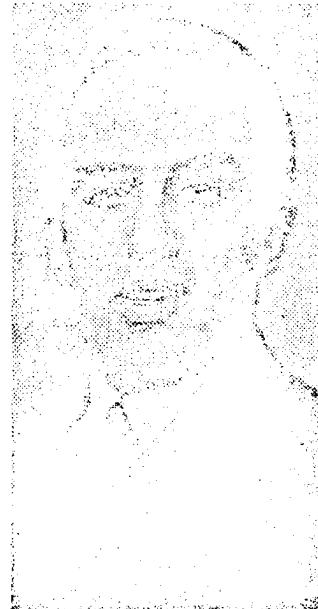
It was Mr. Bader's farewell Senate appearance. On Monday he will go to the Ford Foundation to supervise its programs in Western Europe.

A Major Influence

In three years as a committee consultant, he has helped to alter the role of the Foreign Relations Committee, cut the wings of the Pentagon arms merchants and, perhaps, helped to turn the tide in the Senate against the military establishment.

Virtually everything the committee has done in the last three years has had a Bader imprint. It was he who prepared a staff study on Pentagon arms sales that led to legislative restrictions and closer interagency controls.

He turned to an examination of the Gulf of Tonkin incidents and helped explore the contradictions in the Administration's account of those fateful encounters between American destroyers and North Vietnamese PT boats.

Paul Conklin for The New York Times
Raised the questions, presented the issues.

Working at his cluttered desk — with a picture of his squadron of AJ-2's before him as a reminder—he began calling the Senators' attention to the arms control implications of the drive to develop an ABM system and the secret efforts of the Army to develop chemical-bacteriological warfare.

When the nuclear nonproliferation treaty was submitted to the Foreign Relations Committee, it was Mr. Bader who guided its progress through the committee, writing both the minority and majority reports and raising questions that the Administration would have preferred be left unasked about the treaty's inspection provisions and its commitment to arms control negotiations by the nuclear powers.

That Mr. Bader was able to exert such an influence was probably the result of an unusual concatenation of a deep tide running in the Senate and the personal talents of a young historian seeking a new experience in Congress.

When he came to the Foreign Relations Committee from the State Department in 1966, the Senators were in a restless mood, seeking to reassert what they regarded as their constitutional prerogatives in foreign policy making. Mr. Bader, as a historian, former Foreign Service officer and intelligence analyst, gave some substance to their misgivings.

In repeated conferences with Senator J. W. Fulbright, the committee chairman, for example, he explained that it was not just enough to have some hearings on the Tonkin Gulf situation, that what was needed was to reconstruct the incidents so the committee would have a basis for cross-examining the Pentagon.

For weeks he accumulated messages and movements of the destroyers on a chart. By the time Robert S. McNamara appeared for his confrontation, the committee probably knew as much about the incidents as did the Secretary of Defense.

In his dealings with Senators, Mr. Bader has had the assets of a genial, unruffled manner and a respect for their vanity. Unlike some of his academic colleagues, he does not look down on the Senate as an institution and appreciates that Senators expect their advisers to stay in the background.

Page Denied

Next 1 Page(s) In Document Denied